

October 10, 2005

To: FCC

Subject: 05-235 (Removing CW as a licensing requirement for HF privileges in the Amateur Radio spectrum.)

Dear FCC,

Do we still crank our phones to make a call or crank our cars to start them in the morning? Do we still make engravings on cave walls or send smoke signals to communicate? No, of course not! Technology has improved and we are capable of using simpler, more effective means now of getting these things done.

Looking at Amateur Radio I see a valuable resource being wasted (not being used to its potential) because we are discouraging so many people from either being licensed or from upgrading in the hobby because of an old, antiquated requirement..., CW!

CW is just another mode in Amateur Radio. Why it should take precedence over any other mode in Amateur Radio is beyond me. I would think that making a mode like VOIP a requirement would make more sense than CW. In today's world it is important that you know how to use a computer which you have to do using VOIP with ham radio. Computers are used in almost everyone's everyday life.

The importance of knowing how to use a CW key is not important..., as highlighted by the current requirement of only needing to be able to copy 5WPM., not send! Soon there will be no qualified senders if that keeps up! How many people in the world use a CW key everyday vs. use a computer everyday? Computers are being used right now to send and copy CW faster and more reliably than any operator can do!

People who support the mode of CW do so because they feel by "shoving" it down everyone's throats as a requirement will ensure that it will be around in the future and they will always have someone to talk with. I feel that is wrong, that CW is just another mode and that people that have no interest in using it should not have to when they just want to operate phone on HF. CW will survive on its own without being a requirement just like all the other Amateur Radio modes will if it is that interesting and efficient of a mode.

Major HF manufacturers nearly all include a mic to talk phone on HF as standard equipment with their radios. CW Keys are sold as “optional accessories”. So should the mode of CW be.., optional! Having phone HF privileges and knowing CW has nothing to do with each other.

CW was very valuable in its day, but times have changed. The WRC has left it up to individual countries (Most of whom have dropped the CW requirement) whether or not CW should be required on HF. The U.S. Military has dropped CW as an official required mode of communication.

Most emergency communications today are accomplished in the VHF & UHF bands using mobile repeaters, VOIP technology with portable satellite internet access. All major police, fire and rescue use VHF or UHF bands to communicate on as well. The mode of choice for all of these emergency communications is FM phone. CW being involved in emergency communications is less and less common now as it is found to be too slow and too cumbersome to set up quickly and relay messages.

Most people when you mention Amateur Radio to them immediately identify it as the hobby that requires CW knowledge to get in! Even after 15 years of dropping this requirement to get licensed the perception is still there that CW is required therefore they want no part of Amateur Radio because they have computers, FRS, GMRS, MURS, CB Radio, Cell Phones with PTT radio capabilities..., etc. that allow them to communicate without learning CW! The skit recently shown on the Tonight Show measuring speed against sending a message via CW vs. sending via cell phone texting even hurt our image more. This skit depicted 2 hams dressed up in the old, geeky looking telegrapher's outfits against two normally dressed teens using cell phones. Kind of gives the image to the general public that you have to dress and be a “geek” to be in ham radio! (Not to mention making the public think CW is still required to be involved in our hobby) Nice job guys!

To keep the numbers in our hobby up and to keep people in our hobby we need to remove this outdated requirement ASAP! Not only will it help our hobby and make us more valuable to our country in the time of disaster by adding numbers and attracting more attention to our hobby, it will also spark the advancement of even better gear out there now from the manufacturers.

Currently new HF radio and accessory sales are stagnant here in the USA. Imagine the potential spike in new HF amateur gear to be had if people found out that CW was no longer a requirement to be licensed for this service! This would provide the demand for newer and better gear for the

largest growing active licensed class in Amateur Radio (The Technicians) as well as attract new people to the hobby as well!

Please do our country a service by stopping the elimination of some very valuable people getting involved in our hobby because of this antiquated requirement. Please drop the CW requirement ASAP as the rest of the world is doing!

Thank you.

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